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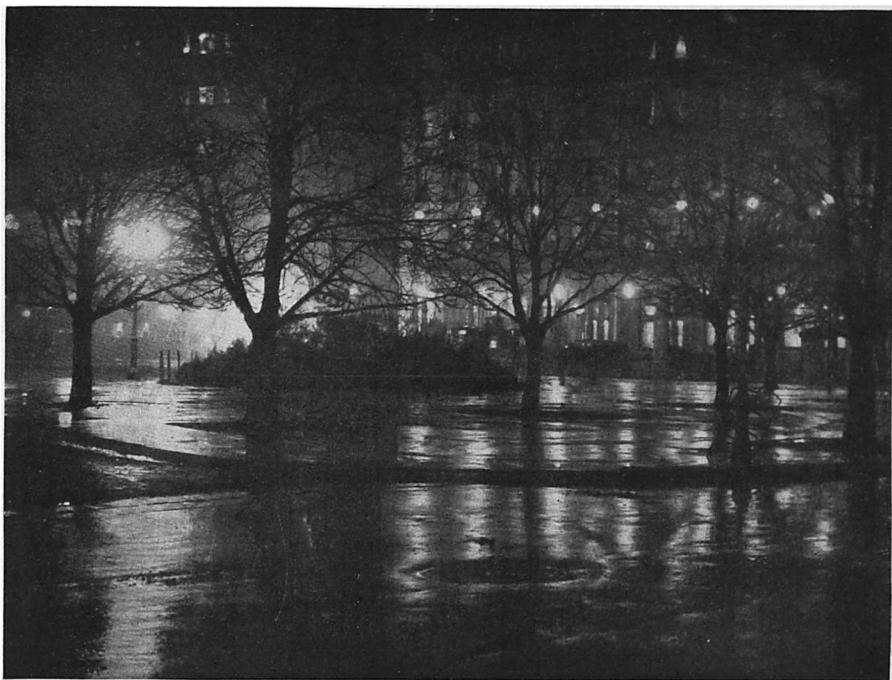
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A BIT OF NEW YORK
By Alfred Stieglitz

SPIRIT OF CIVIC IMPROVEMENT

By A. C. A.

Few Americans to-day would fail to recognize the necessity of a constant and earnest effort to build up the commercial and industrial supremacy of our cities. We devote most of our time as individuals to building toward our own commercial or industrial advantage, and it is a perfectly natural and laudable ambition for every man, and every city, to desire to advance in material prosperity to the utmost limit, consistent with a due regard for the rights of our fellowmen. But neither the townsman as an individual nor the city as a community is satisfied, nor should either be satisfied, to rest upon such material advancement.

Each man as an individual, has his own particular hobby or philanthropy or civic endeavor to which he wishes to devote those portions of his time which are not occupied with business or social activities. And so, it seems, the city as a community should constantly keep in mind the fact that its endeavors should not wholly be centered on the upbuilding of its financial strength, or the increasing of the markets for its various commodities, but that it should devote part of its energy, and a very



PICTURESQUE VIEW IN DIEPPE

By Camille Pissarro

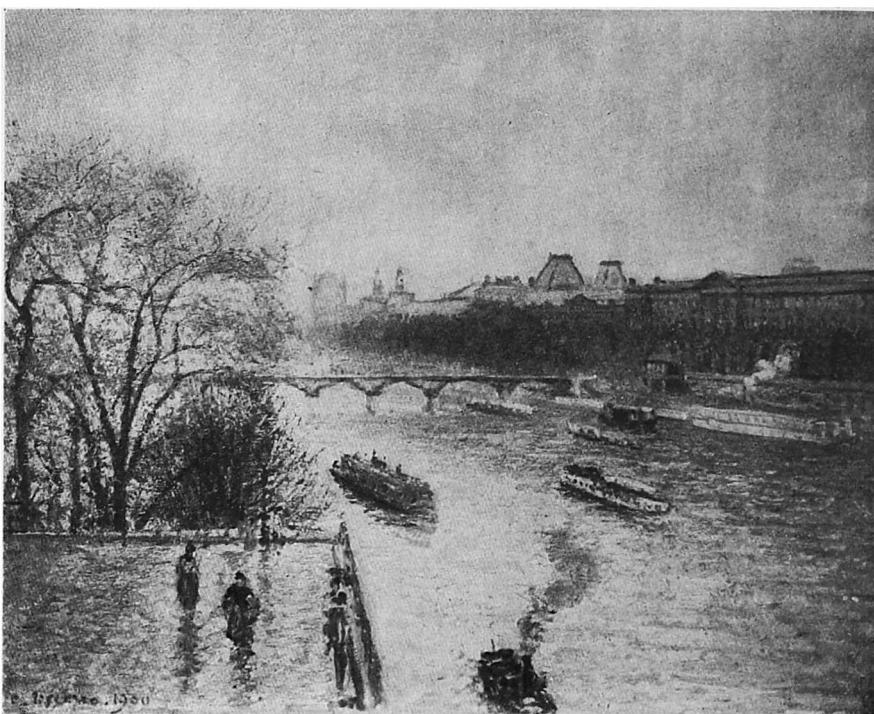
large part of its energy, toward the refinement and beautification of itself as a city. Now it seems to me that every body stands as an exponent of this theory for men and for cities.

Civic associations have done a great deal to advance the material prosperity of towns; the manufacturers, the merchants and the bankers who compose the organizations have seen to it that primarily the Chambers of Commerce have stood for the business side of things, but if all that part of the work of the Chambers were to be erased from the record, there would still remain a noble list of accomplishments toward municipal refinement. The retiring president of the Chamber of Commerce of Cleveland recently voiced a sentiment worth emphasizing in art circles. Said he:

"Of course the concrete example of what we are discussing at once presents itself to the minds of everyone of you. Our government, our country and our city are each contributing the component parts of one great refinement of this city, i. e., the Group Plan. When the government erects its postoffice, it does not simply erect a building that will house so many men and dispose of so many tons of mail matter, or provide so many court rooms for the United States Court, or so many offices for the conduct of the local customs department, but, on the con-

trary, when the government erects its buildings, it calls into its service the engineer, the architect and the artist. The finished result is a monument that expresses beauty in every line. And so it will be with the county building and the city building. As mere places of public utility, we could build them on much more restricted sites than they will occupy, we could build them of much less expensive material than we shall use, we could so design them that they would answer every practical purpose at infinitely less cost, but we will not do that. We will of course look sharply to it that they are proper workshops for public use, but we will build them on spacious grounds, we will build them of fine materials, we will employ the best skill of architects and engineers, artists and sculptors to make them beautiful as well as useful.

"These are conspicuous examples of the refinements of a city. They have their influences upon all who see them. You have frequently heard it stated that corporations are soulless, and yet it is a combination of corporations which is planning the construction of our union station, has taken cognizance of the beauty and civic adornment that will surround this union station and will construct that building, not only with a view to its utilitarian aspects, not only with a view to the convenience



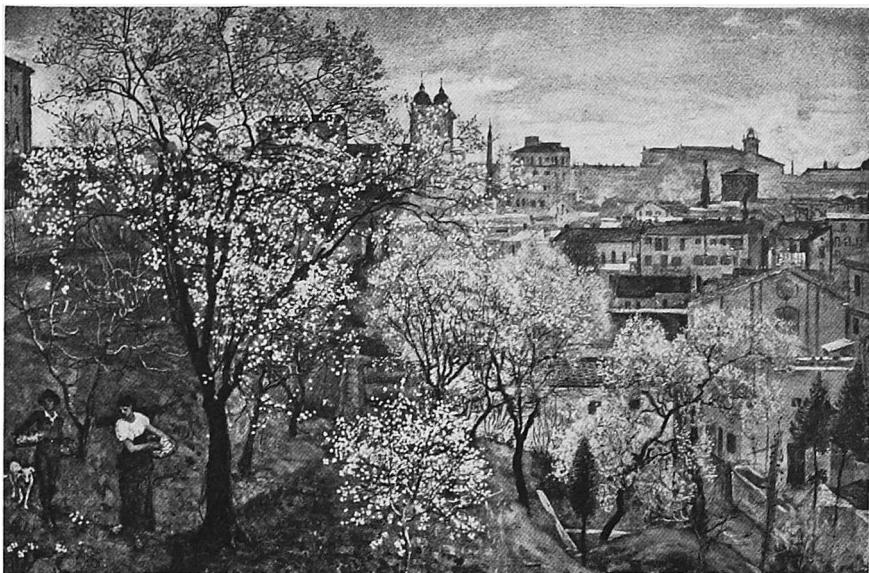
A BIT OF PARIS
By Camille Pissarro

and economy with which passengers and freight may be handled, but also with a view to its taking its proper place among the other monuments of civic pride. And these same corporations will spend several millions of dollars for the sole purpose of bringing this building into harmony with these public buildings.

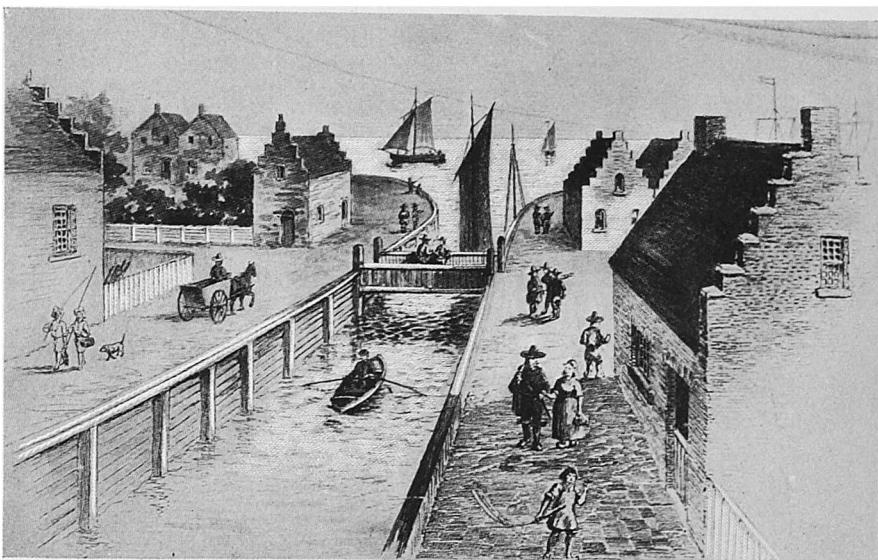
"Every refinement of a great city is an inspiration to finer and still finer achievements in the future. Our baking institutions and commercial establishments; and even some of our factories, and certainly our homes and our churches, show the influence of this spirit of refinement.

"In my address at the opening of the year I made reference to my earnest hope that the near future may witness a beginning of the construction of our art gallery, which will be another refinement of this great city. That the trustees of the several bequests have conducted their several affairs wisely, oftentimes in the face of severe criticism, we shall realize when we see rise upon that spacious site in Wade Park a beautiful building for the housing of the art treasures which have already come and will come to Cleveland. Surely we should be grateful and not impatient for the lapse of time which permits that building to be built without a trace either in its exterior or interior construction of the fact that it is subject to a three-fold separate legal control; that in its completed form it will be an architectural unit expressive of our highest ideals.

"I could go on at great length as to how this spirit of refinement of the utilities of the city has led to that painstaking and thorough and



A SUGGESTIVE BIT OF ROME
By Walter Crane



BROAD STREET, NEW YORK, 1642
(Necessities, Devoid of Art)

comprehensive investigation made by the housing committee of this Chamber a year or two ago; how it found its way through our committee on municipal sanitation and our committee on education into the homes of the people and into the schools to which their children go; how it has extended through our committee on benevolent associations into the charitable institutions. It has spread its ennobling influence all about the city in the form of a lovely green girdle of parks.

"It was recently my privilege to appoint a committee on the location of bridges; the primary duty of that committee and the duty it has earnestly set out to perform is to ascertain where bridges will be needed within the next few years to take care of our traffic; but personally, I shall be disappointed if that committee does not find it consistent, before it finishes its labors, to treat, in some degree at least, of the refinement of that utility. A bridge may be a very good bridge and support the weight of traffic passing between one section of the city and another and still be a very unsightly spectacle. Or, it may take care of all its traffic and yet impress every person who passes from its nearer to its further end, with a sense of the fact that beauty and symmetry may be joined with almost every manifestation of human skill."

Cleveland is just at the beginning of its history; its making, like that of many another American town, is all for the future. Let those who have to do with the making of public improvements see to it that they plan not altogether for the present, and not altogether with a view to economy, and not altogether with a view to the practical material aspect of things. Let them build a city that shall be beautiful as well as great.